



# General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

**113<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda item 162 (continued)

### Follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010: Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations<sup>1</sup>

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In opening this meeting, I would like to be able to commend the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, I cannot do so owing to the paralysis that has characterized the Conference for more than 10 years. That is serious for disarmament, which is, let us not forget, a key element of promoting peace, and for the Conference and its role in global governance. If the Conference does not regain its momentum, it could well be discredited and become completely useless.

In that context, I wish to especially thank our Secretary-General for his efforts to revitalize the Conference, in particular by organizing the High-level Meeting that took place last September. I fully endorse such efforts. Moreover, I had the opportunity to impart my concern with regard to the stagnation of the Conference both during that High-level Meeting and when I addressed the Conference directly in Geneva in February.

The High-level Meeting gave rise to a certain number of welcome initiatives. In particular, the fact that the follow-up to the Meeting will be on future agendas of the First Committee and of the General Assembly provides Member States the opportunity to

discuss the situation of the Conference. Furthermore, it must be recalled that that is in line with the United Nations Charter, which clearly states that the General Assembly

“may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments”.

The General Assembly is empowered to make recommendations to Member States on that issue, and I call on participants to do so today.

During the autumn 2010 session, the First Committee thus adopted a draft resolution by consensus and included the issue on the agenda of its next session. I therefore encourage the Committee to send a strong signal to the Conference on Disarmament this year with a view to overcoming its stagnation.

In order to revitalize the Conference, the Secretary-General also mandated the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to devote itself exclusively to the situation of the Conference on Disarmament during its two working sessions in 2011. I hope that the recommendations contained in the report drawn up by the Board (A/65/228) will hold the full attention of members of the Conference and of all States members of the General Assembly. I believe that the establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons could bring a new perspective and revitalize the Conference. We will shortly have the opportunity, at an

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informal meeting, to hear more about the Board's work.

I believe it crucial to identify the real reason for the paralysis. Some blame the consensus rule. That is part of the basic rules of the Conference's work, and it is always desirable that the decisions of the Conference enjoy broad-based support. Still, the consensus rule should not become a reason for deadlock or an implicit right of veto. However, that explanation falls a little short. The Conference has always respected that principle. In the past, in much more complex, polarized situations, the Conference demonstrated its capacity to successfully conclude difficult negotiations.

What is lacking today is a true political will to move forward. A flexible approach, using all available disarmament tools and based on stronger negotiation and persuasion skills, is necessary to overcome resistance and build a climate of trust.

While informal approaches are, in my opinion, an avenue to explore, such approaches and their outcomes must nevertheless be in the context of the Conference. We must not deprive the Conference of its legitimacy by circumventing it, but help it to recover its former effectiveness. Our efforts must seek that goal, and that must motivate our discussions today.

In trying to overcome the current deadlock, it is important to maintain an integrated approach on disarmament and non-proliferation matters. That is one of the great qualities of the programme of work adopted in 2009. Although unfortunately never implemented, that programme is the outcome of a subtle balance among the various interests and concerns of Member States. In that regard, it should serve to inspire us if we want to move forward, and it could be used as a model to the Conference in the quest for a new programme of work. I am confident that States members of the Conference will ultimately shoulder their responsibilities, negotiate a new programme of work and, above all, implement it.

In recent years, the international environment has been particularly conducive to disarmament. Expectations are therefore high. It is our duty not to disappoint them. I therefore call on speakers today, beyond stating support for the Conference, to truly examine concrete channels in order to enable us to overcome the deadlock and to provide the means for significant progress on disarmament.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

**The Secretary-General:** We meet in the midst of a growing crisis of confidence. The United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, has failed us for too long. As we look ahead, we face two critical questions. First, what are we to do when the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum is incapable of delivering on its mandate? Secondly, how can the world resume the process of building disarmament norms that apply universally?

Those questions led me to convene the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations last September. The concerns expressed at that Meeting, coupled with the many initiatives that were proposed, testify to the importance that Member States attach to the challenge. I am also grateful to the President of the General Assembly for his own efforts to address the issue. In the Chairman's summary of that meeting (A/65/496, annex), I proposed four actions.

First, I strongly suggested that the Conference on Disarmament readopt its 2009 programme of work, or a similar proposal submitted during the 2010 session. To encourage progress, I addressed the Conference on Disarmament last January for my third time as Secretary-General. So far, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to respond. I look forward to a more action-oriented move from the membership, pending the final status of the Conference on Disarmament's 2011 session.

Secondly, I proposed that the General Assembly include an item to follow-up on the High-level Meeting on the agenda of its sixty-fifth session. The Assembly approved that request. It has also added the item to the agenda of its forthcoming sixty-sixth session.

Thirdly, I asked my Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to review the issues raised at the High-level Meeting. The Board has completed its review. My report on the Board's work (A/65/228) is now before members, and I look forward to their feedback.

Fourthly, I stated that I would submit a report on the High-level Meeting and its follow-up to next year's first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015

Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Member States have identified many options for revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament and carrying forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. One option is the status quo approach, namely, to continue seeking consensus in the Conference on Disarmament without fundamentally changing its mandate or rules. Many States, however, are understandably reluctant to follow such a course, given the years that have passed without result. Indeed, I am among the many who have warned that the status quo will simply render the Conference on Disarmament irrelevant and obsolete. A second set of options consists of various proposals for fundamental reforms in the multilateral disarmament machinery. Some feel that those would be best addressed at a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. There is still no consensus among Member States on convening such a gathering. That leaves the third option — incremental change.

Yet even these proposals, modest as they are, have encountered resistance. Various States argue strongly for or against changing the Conference on Disarmament's rules of procedure. Proposals for ad hoc mechanisms have also found supporters and opponents. State policy priorities differ widely. States even disagree over where reforms should be implemented. Should it be in the Conference on Disarmament, in the General Assembly and its First Committee, outside the United Nations, in a conference on a specific disarmament issue, or in an ad hoc forum organized by like-minded countries?

As Secretary-General, I see no fundamental flaw in the United Nations disarmament machinery that may be blamed for this deadlock, and certainly none that cannot be overcome by changes in State policies. The problem lies not with the vehicle, but with the driver. What is needed most of all is a closer alignment between policy priorities and multilateral disarmament goals. If differences persist, we could consider the appointment of a high-level panel of eminent persons, as I have suggested. Alternatively, States could conduct the negotiations in an ad hoc committee of the General Assembly or at a United Nations conference.

There are no quick fixes. The road ahead will not be easy. Yet we must never abandon multilateralism or our respect for universal norms. We must remain true

to the ideals of the United Nations. In addressing disarmament, as with other global public goods, our goal is not to advance the preferences of the few, but the common interests of all.

If the Conference on Disarmament remains deadlocked, the General Assembly has a responsibility to step in. As I have said before, the Conference on Disarmament should not be held perpetually hostage by one or two members. Concerns should be addressed through negotiations. The stakes are too high to continue falling short. The world expects progress. Let us defer no longer. Let us put an end to this long cycle of stagnation. For my part, I will do all I can to assist in achieving our shared goals.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now suspend the formal meeting to declare open the informal meeting of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the High-level Meeting held on 24 September 2010 to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There are 50 speakers on the list. That calls for a certain discipline with respect to the length of statements. I propose limiting statements to eight minutes, but it is quite possible and representatives are free to talk for a shorter time than that and only to speak for five minutes. In preparing texts of that length, one can count on a page usually taking three minutes.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at this important meeting. The Non-Aligned Movement is composed of 120 countries, and if I take eight minutes for each of them, it will take up about one day to deliver my statement, but I am not going to do that.

This meeting, convened as a follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations that was held upon the initiative of the Secretary-General on 24 September 2010, is very important. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

As consistently reaffirmed by the Non-Aligned Movement summits and ministerial conferences, including the recent sixteenth NAM ministerial conference held in Bali, Indonesia, in May, NAM underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It reiterates its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. NAM reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the related issues of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects, and stresses the importance that efforts aiming at nuclear non-proliferation should be parallel to simultaneous efforts on nuclear disarmament. Progress in both is essential to strengthening international peace and security.

In that context, NAM stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the first special session devoted to disarmament and as a legal obligation, should not be made conditional to confidence-building measures or other disarmament efforts. While emphasizing the vital role of a strong and genuine political will in multilateral negotiations on disarmament, NAM hopes that today's deliberations and the proposals made by the Secretary-General and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters will contribute to enhancing political will in support of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the multilateral disarmament negotiations within the United Nations.

To realize a world free of nuclear weapons free from the colossal global expenditures and the energies of the nuclear-weapon States concentrated on the possession, development and modernization of nuclear weapons, using such expenditures instead to further global development and peace, it is critical that nuclear-weapon States fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations. There should be concrete progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

NAM reiterates its deep concern over the lack of progress towards nuclear disarmament, in particular on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with the relevant multilateral legal obligations. As a necessary step in the much-sought and long-delayed realization of general and complete disarmament, NAM underscores the need for the

nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear disarmament obligations and their unequivocal undertaking in 2000, and further reiterated at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), so as to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. In that regard, NAM emphasizes the urgent need to commence negotiations on comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament with a specific time frame and without delay.

NAM notes with concern the lack of multilateral agreement on a number of its key priorities, in particular beginning negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, and calls for tangible progress in that regard. NAM States parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are convinced that it is vital that the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference on aspects of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East be implemented.

Welcoming the adoption by consensus of the detailed plan of action on the Middle East, particularly the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, and the conclusion and recommendations of the follow-on action of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, NAM States parties to the NPT strongly urge the Secretary-General and sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in close consultation and coordination with the States of the region, to immediately take the necessary measures to convene in 2012 the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the Middle East.

NAM remains steadfast in fully supporting the multilateral disarmament agenda and in strengthening the United Nations disarmament machinery. It is high time that all countries, working together, cooperate more and bring to bear the respective political capital to revitalize that crucial machinery. Promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on creating a suitable political environment, taking into account the security interests of all States, rather than changing the rules of procedure.

While there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery, it is important to recall the achievements arrived at by the

international community through the United Nations disarmament machinery, including key legal instruments, resolutions, guidelines and other crucial documents that constitute the framework, and are a reference for the work of the United Nations in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It thus remains important to preserve the nature, role and purpose of each part of this important machinery.

NAM recognizes the need to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery. In this context, NAM notes that the main difficulty facing the disarmament machinery lies in the lack of true political will by some States to achieve actual progress, including, in particular, on nuclear disarmament.

While it is important to recall the achievements arrived at by the international community within the Conference on Disarmament, NAM expresses its disappointment at the fact that the Conference has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda for many years. In this regard, NAM believes that it is counterproductive to ascribe the lack of concrete results in the Conference only to its rules of procedure, as such an approach could conceal the true obstacle faced by the Conference, which is lack of political will.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call on the Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority. NAM emphasizes the necessity of starting negotiations without further delay on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. NAM reaffirms the importance of the unanimous conclusion reached by the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

NAM noted the adoption by the Conference of the programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864) on 29 May 2009, which was not implemented. NAM calls on the Conference to agree by consensus on a

balanced and comprehensive programme of work without further delay.

NAM encourages the Conference on Disarmament to consider appointing a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference as early as possible, with a view to examining the possible expansion of its membership, in accordance with its rules of procedure.

NAM also reaffirms the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery and reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as reaffirmed in the statement on the total elimination of nuclear weapons adopted by the sixteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Bali.

NAM will consider the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Board and present our views during discussions of this issue during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Serrano** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Iceland, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

I would like first of all to commend you, Mr. President, for having scheduled this debate at this very appropriate moment. I should like also to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts and the message conveyed to us today, as well as the Chair of the Advisory Group and the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament.

The European Union is indeed disappointed at the absence of progress since the high-level meeting last September. We are nonetheless hopeful that our deliberations today will prove an opportunity to heed the calls made at that meeting for forward-looking and concrete discussions of future options — both for revitalizing the work of the Conference on

Disarmament and for the review of practical ideas on how to pursue multilateral disarmament negotiations.

We are encouraged by the fact that the high-level meeting and the General Assembly follow-up resolution, resolution 65/93, have stimulated the reflection process in both Geneva and New York. Indeed, we have been encouraged by important positive developments in the areas of global disarmament and non-proliferation over the past two years, illustrated, for example, by Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), the New START Agreement, the Washington on Nuclear Security Summit, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the intensified international public debate in which you, Mr. Secretary-General, have been personally involved, through your five-point plan. The European Union warmly welcomes these developments, though we are, naturally, aware that renewed and constant effort will be needed to ensure that the international community builds on the new momentum.

Indeed, now is the time to reinforce and revitalize multilateral efforts, since we all recognize that today's global security problems require cooperative and multilateral solutions. We in the European Union are fully committed to maintaining and strengthening the momentum and committed to implementing agreed outcomes in full cooperation with other States, both because this is in keeping with our EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and because this is more than ever a key condition of international peace and security.

Notwithstanding the positive trends overall, the European Union remains deeply troubled by the apparent dysfunction of a crucial part of the disarmament machinery: the ongoing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. The adoption in 2009 of the programme of work would have been an important breakthrough which would have allowed Conference members to start negotiations on a multilateral and verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. For the European Union, launching these negotiations remains important and urgent. The EU thus continues to urge the last remaining State so far unwilling to join the consensus to begin negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Doing so would allow the Conference to resume its negotiating

role and thereby regain credibility and continue to pursue its fundamental purpose.

All States members of the Conference on Disarmament should, we believe, appreciate the fact that starting FMCT negotiations is the beginning of a process of identifying and protecting specific national security concerns, rather than the outcome of such a process. The European Union considers the blockage of the whole Conference on Disarmament forum by a refusal even to start negotiations to be an unacceptable practice. It seriously undermines the principle of multilateral cooperation.

We also consider that there are confidence-building measures that can be taken immediately, without waiting for the beginning of formal negotiations. That is why we call on all States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and then uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The EU thus reaffirms once more its commitment to engaging in substantive discussions on all the other core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

We deeply regret that despite clear manifestations of strong political will on the part of the majority of Conference on Disarmament members and firm support for negotiations and clear calls at both the current session of the General Assembly and the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Conference has not yet been able to build upon the momentum in global disarmament and non-proliferation. We acknowledge the security concerns of all States, but at the same time we firmly believe that the consensus rule must not be subject to abuse. The world cannot afford to stand still on the crucial issues of disarmament and non-proliferation or to allow procedural issues to stymie real political progress. A review of working methods is therefore part of the EU's proposals to improve the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me use this occasion to reiterate the EU's longstanding attachment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. The European Union supports the call made by the informal group of observer States to the Conference, including some States members of the EU, to appoint, during the current session, a special coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Consistent with the EU's engagement with civil society, we are also keen to explore ways to strengthen the voice of non-governmental organizations and to associate research institutions with the work of the Conference.

The First Committee is another important body where discussion of current topics and potential initiatives on non-proliferation and disarmament issues can fruitfully take place. States Members of the United Nations share responsibility for maintaining the relevance of this forum, and we believe that the First Committee should therefore improve its working methods so as to be capable of debating contemporary security challenges and developing concrete measures to address them.

I would also like to make mention of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We believe that its procedures and operating principles should also be thoroughly reviewed and enhanced.

Greater involvement of civil society in the work of that body should also be welcome. The aim of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is to submit recommendations on issues of disarmament and arms control to the General Assembly and, through it, to the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, it is with great regret that the EU notes that both the deliberative and the negotiating bodies set up under the auspices of the General Assembly have been falling short of their agreed goals for more than a decade.

The Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the mandate it received, should be the place to forge multilateral treaties shared by nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. However, given the continuing stalemate in the Conference, the international community needs to reflect on options and, if necessary, identify other ways to ensure progress. In sum, Mr. President, the European Union is ready to engage with you and with all States Members of the United Nations to identify ways and means to overcome the deadlock in the Conference.

Let me summarize the European Union's concrete proposals. First, we call on all States Members of the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty without delay and to begin work on the other issues on the agenda. Secondly, we call on all States possessing nuclear weapons to declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for

nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Thirdly, we call on the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission to review their working methods and to duly reflect on this issue in their reports to the General Assembly. We naturally encourage the Assembly to remain seized of the issue. Fourthly, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to include the current observer States as full members. Lastly, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to explore ways to strengthen the contribution of non-governmental organizations in the Conference and to increase contacts with research institutions.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to making the United Nations and the disarmament machinery able to deliver tangible results. We also stand ready to work with all delegations on further steps to make other operational suggestions and to envisage other concrete and operational options. The effective functioning of multilateral disarmament institutions is vital to our security. The long-term deadlock of core disarmament forums such as the Conference on Disarmament poses a serious problem which it calls all States to overcome. Moreover, time is running out. The Conference on Disarmament needs to resume its work without delay. We reiterate our call for a substantive follow-up and for the disarmament machinery to do what it was created to do.

**Mr. Araud (France):** Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, to thank you for convening this follow-up meeting to the High-level Meeting held on 24 September 2010. We welcome the personal commitment and leadership you have shown on disarmament and non-proliferation. We fully support your continuing efforts to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We are deeply concerned by its long-running stalemate and lack of progress since last year's meeting. It is crucial to reaffirm the negotiating role of the Conference and to allow it to resume its substantive work without delay.

Ten months after the High-level Meeting, today's follow-up meeting is a timely opportunity to reflect on the situation of the disarmament machinery and to consider ways to make further progress on disarmament and international peace and security.

We welcome the numerous positive developments in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In particular, the adoption of a concrete and balanced action plan on all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in 2010 has shown the international community's firm commitment to reinforcing the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and addressing nuclear issues with a global and pragmatic approach.

Now, all State parties must work together to advance the implementation of the NPT action plan. In this context, the permanent five States members of the Security Council are strongly determined to assume their responsibilities and play their part. At the High-level Meeting in September last year, France undertook to organize the first permanent five follow-up meeting to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Accordingly, on 30 June and 1 July, the permanent five met in Paris at the Director Generals and experts level with a view to considering progress on the commitment they made at the NPT Review Conference and to contributing to the preparation of the next NPT review cycle. They discussed a wide range of issues relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That was the second time that the permanent five got together in that format with that agenda, the first being the London conference on confidence-building measures in 2009. The Paris conference was therefore a significant and vital opportunity to further build mutual trust and confidence on nuclear matters.

We would like to share with the Assembly the general outcomes of our discussions, which were reflected in the final joint press statement issued at the end of the conference. As nuclear-weapon States, we discussed how we intend to meet our disarmament obligations under the NPT, including engagement on the efforts called for in the 2010 NPT action plan, particularly the steps outlined in action 5, as well as reporting and other efforts.

We continued our previous discussions on the issues of transparency and mutual confidence, including nuclear doctrine and capabilities, and on verification. Such measures are important for establishing a firm foundation for further disarmament efforts.

We also shared views on measures to uphold the NPT's non-proliferation pillar to include how to respond to notifications of withdrawal from the NPT, while recognizing the provisions of article 10, and stressed the need to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, including by promoting the adoption of the Additional Protocol and the reinforcement of IAEA resources and capabilities for deterring and detecting non-compliance.

All States — NPT parties and non-parties — must contribute to fulfilling the overall objective of disarmament by creating the necessary security environment, resolving regional tensions, promoting collective security, ensuring that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime remains robust and reliable, and making progress in all areas of disarmament.

We are convinced that, as the sole standing multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, the Conference on Disarmament should maintain the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. We call on all Conference member States to agree without delay on the comprehensive and balanced programme of work, allowing the Conference to resume its substantive work.

We recognized that the one key element in the effective implementation of article 6 of the NPT and in the prevention of nuclear proliferation is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). An FMCT would help cut off the most important building blocks needed for nuclear weapons. We reiterate our support for the immediate commencement of negotiation at the Conference on Disarmament of an FMCT, including verification provisions.

In order to sustain the potential of negotiation in the Conference, the permanent five will, prior to the next session of the General Assembly, renew their efforts with other relevant partners to promote such negotiation. Furthermore, the permanent five recall their commitment to promoting and ensuring the swift entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its universalization.

*(spoke in French)*

I would like at this juncture to make some brief remarks in my national capacity. I fully endorse the European Union's statement. France, in all forums,

including the Group of Eight (G-8) which we are chairing, supports any initiative seeking to improve international security in all areas: nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, ballistic proliferation and space.

We must continue to jointly insist to those who may seek to take advantage of the stalemate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament that they are going against history. Today there is a consensus, minus one, for opening negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Needless to say, we hope that those negotiations will be conducted under the auspices of the Conference, since that is what it exists for.

With regard to the start of negotiations, we must demonstrate visibly our commitment to ending production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Four nuclear-weapon States have already declared a moratorium on production of such material. We call earnestly on all nuclear Powers to declare a similar moratorium immediately. And we must go even further by making this halt to fissile material production irreversible. France has been a pioneer in this area by dismantling its production facilities irreversibly.

In the interests of saving time, I will stop here. The full version of my statement will be available on the website of France's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

**Mr. Quinlan** (Australia): I have the privilege today of speaking on behalf of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), whose current members are Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

We are very grateful to you for convening this debate, Mr. President, as well as for your personal efforts towards the revitalization of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, including through your visit to Geneva this year. We also welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to this critical task.

This debate comes at an appropriate moment. At the conclusion of the second part of the Conference's annual session and sufficiently ahead of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, it is the right time to jointly assess the developments that have taken place since last September's High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and to exchange views on how to

facilitate the Conference's resumption of substantive work. We should capitalize on a period of reflective momentum that has prevailed in New York and Geneva in recent months, and for which the meeting itself was a constructive stimulus.

The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative was established in September 2010 in order to build on the renewed momentum in disarmament and non-proliferation resulting from, in particular, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At their second foreign ministers' meeting in Berlin on 30 April, the NPDI member States reaffirmed their intention to work towards achieving nuclear disarmament and strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. Recognizing the danger to all humankind posed by the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons and the necessity of addressing increased proliferation risks, decreasing nuclear arsenals, strengthening nuclear security and improving nuclear safety, we continue to consider it compelling and urgent to reduce nuclear risks and achieve tangible progress on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons. In Berlin, the NPDI foreign ministers reiterated their determination to support and help drive implementation of the consensus outcomes of last year's NPT Review Conference.

NPDI members have welcomed, sometimes led and certainly actively participated in various initiatives in the first and second part of the Conference on Disarmament's session this year aimed at facilitating work on the its current core issues. At the same time, however, we note with deep regret that the Conference has not been able to profit from broader positive trends in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It has so far not implemented the three actions in the NPT Review Conference's action plan that pertain to its work: action 6 on establishing a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament; action 7 on substantive discussions on negative security assurances; and action 15 on fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations.

We also have to acknowledge that, instead of making progress, the Conference has actually taken a step backwards from its consensus adoption of a programme of work (CD/1864) in May 2009. We are convinced that the use of the consensus rule to prevent the start of FMCT negotiations, as well as substantive discussions on the other three core issues, has not only

harmed the Conference's already diminished credibility, but also seriously undermined the entire multilateral disarmament process and, in the long run, therefore, the security interests of the entire international community.

The Conference on Disarmament has been unable to fulfil the task assigned to it — the negotiation of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments — for more than a decade. In light of this situation, we reiterate our firm conviction that the Conference must immediately start negotiations on an FMCT. However, while patience is a virtue, of course, continued passivity is not. Therefore, if an agreement on launching FMCT negotiations continues to elude us in the third part of the Conference's session, we are determined to ask the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session later this year to address the issue and consider ways to proceed with the aim of beginning FMCT negotiations.

We acknowledge that, of course, FMCT negotiations will be challenging from both a political and a technical point of view, no matter what venue is selected. In our view, these two aspects are closely intertwined. While we continue to consider that the earliest possible start of negotiations on an FMCT is the priority, we consider that establishing a group of scientific experts assigned to examine the technical aspects of an FMCT could facilitate and contribute to the start of negotiations. We are very willing to discuss this idea with interested parties.

The NPDI's concerns are by no means limited to one specific aspect of the Conference's work. In order to reshape it into an effectively functioning institution whose composition reflects the realities of this century, not the last, its current working methods need to be examined critically, its membership reviewed and its interaction with civil society increased.

While we consider the Conference's return to substantive work to be the most urgent task we have, our interest in revitalization extends beyond it. The Disarmament Commission constitutes another theoretically important but increasingly irrelevant pillar of the United Nations disarmament machinery. It would greatly profit from a review of its current work and from well-calibrated structural reform.

Furthermore, we call on the General Assembly's own First Committee to increase its practical relevance to disarmament and international security. Given the

objective of today's debate, we particularly appeal to it to move the FMCT and other disarmament core issues forward. Overall, the Assembly should, in our view, continue to play an important role in marshalling the expectations of the international community vis-à-vis the multilateral disarmament machinery and identifying possible solutions to persistent problems. We look forward to this, as well as to possible future debates on the highly relevant and critical issue of making progress on multilateral disarmament negotiations.

**Mr. Tatham** (United Kingdom): I thank you for convening this important discussion, Mr. President. The United Kingdom welcomes your personal commitment and the leadership you have shown on disarmament and non-proliferation. We are very pleased to have this opportunity to take stock since last September's High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations.

The Government of the United Kingdom remains firmly committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and to making progress on multilateral disarmament. We take seriously our international disarmament obligations and have made concrete progress in the past year. In our strategic defence and security review in October 2010, we announced a number of disarmament measures around reducing the number of nuclear warheads and missiles on our submarines. We also gave a new, stronger assurance to non-nuclear weapon States.

There has been good progress on the international disarmament agenda in 2011. In February, the New START agreement entered into force, and a few weeks ago, the five nuclear-weapon States recognized under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) took part in a conference of the permanent five members of the Security Council in Paris. This was only the second time such a meeting has taken place, following the 2009 meeting hosted by the United Kingdom. We were delighted with the confidence-building discussions that took place and by the opportunity to look in detail at our disarmament obligations.

The outcomes from the conference, which my French colleague has already outlined on behalf of the permanent five, clearly demonstrate our collective determination to work together to implement the

commitments made in the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). This includes practical steps taken by the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia as depositaries of the NPT in our commitment towards the implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

We look forward to making progress on the disarmament and confidence-building initiatives agreed at the conference. As part of this follow-up work, the United Kingdom will host an expert-level meeting with our permanent five partners on lessons learned from our pioneering work with Norway on the verification of warhead dismantlement. Our work with Norway has demonstrated that nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States alike are able to make an active contribution to their NPT obligations through research into the verification of nuclear disarmament, while still complying with their non-proliferation obligations. Indeed, the cooperation of non-nuclear-weapon States in nuclear disarmament verification research is necessary in order to achieve effective and mutually trusted technical and procedural solutions to support verifiable multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Despite positive progress and momentum elsewhere, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has so far failed to produce any substantive work since the High-level Meeting last September. There is overwhelming support for the principle of a treaty that would end the future production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. Starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) would constitute a significant achievement and necessary building block for our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, as we all know, one country continues to block this step. It is for this reason, as opposed to any other, that we are here today and have made no tangible progress on FMCT since the High-level Meeting last September.

If we want to move forward, we must focus our collective efforts on persuading all members to agree again to set the Conference on Disarmament back to work and start negotiating an FMCT. The side events organized by our Australian and Japanese colleagues constituted a welcome and informative initiative towards this end.

If it is to strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation framework in a meaningful way, a future FMCT must prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and other explosive devices by all States. For this reason, the United Kingdom wishes to re-emphasize its strong commitment to starting negotiations on an FMCT within the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament represents the best option we have for negotiations with all the relevant States as members. It is an institution that, through its rules of procedure, shows respect for everyone's security. And we still have a programme of work ready to go, agreed by all except one. Document CD/1864 provides for negotiations on an FMCT as well as substantive discussions on the other agenda items on which the Conference on Disarmament has also failed to make progress in the past two years.

We must continue to reassure all members that the Conference on Disarmament's well-established rules offer protection for all countries security interests, both during negotiations and in the eventual signature and ratification phase. It is to be expected that some countries will have concerns about what an FMCT might mean for them. There will be plenty of opportunities to discuss all of the issues and concerns at the negotiating table.

The public statement from the Paris conference of the permanent five reiterated the strong support of the five for the immediate start of FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. The permanent five made a commitment to renew efforts with relevant partners to promote such negotiations prior to the next session of the General Assembly. We intend to pursue further detailed discussions on the main treaty issues with other relevant partners, building on the side events that have already taken place. As these discussions progress, momentum towards negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament will continue to build. We appeal to all States to sustain this momentum, and on the last remaining State to join the consensus and end its block on allowing the Conference on Disarmament to conduct its work as soon as possible. This block has been damaging for multilateralism inside the United Nations and has encouraged some to consider bypassing traditional institutions in order to try to make quick progress on an FMCT.

The Conference on Disarmament urgently needs to show that it is still relevant and that it can prove its potential as the best means of finding sustainable solutions for the challenges of global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the twenty-first century.

**Ms. Gottemoeller** (United States of America): I thank you, sir, for the opportunity to speak today. The United States welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene last September's High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, in the hopes that it would spur progress on negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament. We co-sponsored resolution 65/93 on follow-up to the High-level Meeting, and we also welcome the opportunity today to take stock of where we are 10 months later. The United States shares your commitment to progress, Mr. President, and your interest in seeing this process carried forward.

Two years ago in his speech in Prague, President Obama affirmed the commitment of the United States "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" and laid out a plan of action for near-term practical steps to move in that direction. Since then, significant progress has been registered. I will not detail all of it here, but I would like to highlight a few successes because they stand in stark contrast to the continuing failure to begin negotiations on a priority objective — a ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

A key arms control achievement of the past year was the entry into force of the New START agreement with the Russian Federation this past February. Implementation of the Treaty is well under way. As of last weekend, we and the Russian Federation had exchanged 1,000 notifications in implementation of the Treaty regime. Furthermore, we have conducted 13 inspections, six by the Russian Federation and seven by the United States. We are keeping pace in our implementation efforts.

In May, President Obama also submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent the protocols of the African and South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free zones Treaties. And we are in discussion with parties to the South-East Asia and Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zones Treaties in an effort to reach agreement that

would allow the United States to sign the Protocols to those treaties, as well.

The United States remains committed to securing ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and we are engaging the United States Senate and the American public on the merits of that Treaty.

As already reported by the representative of France, the nuclear-weapon States recognized under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the permanent five — met in Paris on 30 June and 1 July to engage on issues bearing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and in particular steps outlined in the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). This was a continuation of discussions begun in London in 2009 and will continue with a third conference in the context of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 NPT Review Conference. These meetings are helping to build a process for permanent-five dialogue on transparency, nuclear doctrine and verification, recognizing that such a dialogue is needed if we are to establish a firm foundation for further disarmament efforts.

The United States has spared no effort to initiate negotiations in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. The completion of such a treaty continues to be the top multilateral priority for the United States and the vast majority of others, and would be a major international achievement in non-proliferation and disarmament. At a time when significant progress has been registered in other areas of arms control and disarmament, it is all the more disappointing that a single State has prevented the Conference on Disarmament from again taking its place on the disarmament stage and undertaking negotiations to reach that long-overdue objective.

The preference of the United States is to negotiate the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) within the Conference on Disarmament. We welcomed the initiative of Australia and Japan to organize serious technical FMCT discussions at the margins of the Conference on Disarmament this year. The activity proved to be productive, substantive and collegial, but this does not obscure the central fact that the Conference on Disarmament remains blocked and that we are no closer to FMCT negotiations today than we

were two years ago, when a compromise programme of work was adopted by consensus by all 65 Conference on Disarmament members.

It is because of this continuing stalemate that we have launched consultations to move the issue forward. We are encouraged, therefore, that the permanent five agreed in Paris to take steps prior to the next General Assembly session to renew efforts with other relevant partners to promote such FMCT negotiations, and we are planning these activities now.

Turning to the issue of the United Nations disarmament machinery and how it functions — or does not function — I note that this is often a subject of discussion. For example, improvements motivated the 1978 decision to create the Committee on Disarmament — renamed Conference soon after — by the then-member States of the Conference on Disarmament's predecessor body. They judged that certain changes, such as a rotating presidency and membership expansion, would render the body more representative and more productive. The decisions of those States were recalled in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

More recently, serious thought and a number of interesting ideas have emerged regarding reform of the Conference on Disarmament and other disarmament machinery. But we should consider such proposals with our eyes wide open, realistic about what the root cause of the current deadlock is. While the machinery could certainly benefit from a tune-up, it is not the underlying cause of the breakdown in the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference has produced good results in years past: the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Put simply, when countries share an objective, they can move it forward in the Conference on Disarmament, and this is an experience we wish to see repeated, starting with the fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Secretary-General has offered recommendations on how to proceed with a review of multilateral disarmament affairs, and he has provided us with a thoughtful report on the work of his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/65/228). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research has also provided stimulating food for thought. We have a wealth of ideas.

A panel of eminent persons, the Conference on Disarmament itself, or some others might usefully continue their exploration to include recommendations on the following: how to revamp or reconsider the role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which, after yeoman's efforts, has been unable to reach consensus for a number of years on any agenda item; and how to update the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. Its decalogue and agenda could be updated to reflect the current international security environment. Members should also review some of its other procedures and recommend changes that would encourage greater continuity and focus.

Also included would be recommendations on how to provide for continuity on an agreed Conference on Disarmament work programme from year to year, such as automatic rollover of an agreed programme of work; how to protect national security interests while preventing abuse of the consensus rule; and whether expansion of the Conference on Disarmament would improve its efficiency, and how to reflect universal disarmament goals in deliberative and negotiating bodies while maintaining their efficacy and ensuring that States' security concerns are respected and protected. This is the fundamental issue. In this regard, we view that, theoretically, working with 193 members would inevitably pose complexities. I might note that the Conference on Disarmament in its current composition, expanded since 1996 to 65 member States, has yet to demonstrate its ability to function as a negotiating body.

In exploring new ways to proceed, we think that balance is needed. The status quo is unacceptable, but we should also guard against being overly ambitious, lest we lose our way. As we seek our way forward, we must keep our eye on the prize and, for most of the international community, that prize is a fissile material cut-off treaty as the next immediate multilateral nuclear disarmament step. Calls for yet another special session on disarmament are a distraction at best. A special session on disarmament is not the only or the most practical vehicle for reform in the light of its record of failure. Unless we have agreed objectives for such a session, we should better direct our efforts where progress can be made.

**Mr. Wang Min** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank you and the Secretary-General for your statements.

The High-level Meeting held in September 2010 held useful discussions on the work of the Conference on Disarmament and multilateral disarmament negotiations. China hopes that today's meeting will also play an active role in facilitating multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Arms control and disarmament are closely related to security and have always been the barometer of changes in the international security situation. It is now the general hope of the international community that the multilateral disarmament process, and the work of the Conference on Disarmament in particular, will move forward so as to further promote the security of all States.

Since the beginning of this year, the parties have displayed positive intentions and adopted a constructive approach to the advancement of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. However, differences among the parties remain to be bridged and renewed efforts are required of Conference members in order to break the impasse in its work.

Given the current circumstances, China would like to make the following proposals on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward the multilateral disarmament process.

First, the authority of the Conference on Disarmament should be respected and maintained. As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference is irreplaceable by any other international mechanism. Since the end of the Cold War, the Conference has negotiated and concluded the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. These two instruments have contributed greatly to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the advancement of the international arms control and disarmament process, and their effects have been vindicated by history. If the fissile material cut-off treaty is to fulfil its dual objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and in order to ensure its authority, effectiveness and universality, it must be negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, the legitimate security concerns of States should receive due attention and equal treatment. The Conference on Disarmament cannot work in a vacuum, and international and regional security situations are bound to have a direct and important bearing on its work. The legitimate security

concerns of member States should be fully respected and appropriately addressed, both at the time of launching negotiations and during the negotiating process. It is for this very purpose that we engage in serious negotiations on multilateral arms control treaties, and it is also the necessary precondition for universal support for and compliance with such treaties.

Thirdly, we should maintain confidence in the Conference on Disarmament and further engage in creative thinking. Progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament depends on the common efforts of — and especially synergy among — all member States in the framework of the Conference. Any idea or practice of resorting to another framework is obviously not conducive to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and will not produce a satisfactory fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). In the face of deadlock and difficulties, it is all the more necessary for Conference members to use political wisdom and fully mobilize diplomatic creativity to maintain the momentum on launching FMCT negotiations, and spare no effort in seeking workable ways to push the Conference to carry out substantive work on FMCT-related issues.

Fourthly, efforts should be made to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament in a comprehensive manner. While negotiations on the FMCT should start at an early date, the Conference should also engage in substantive work on other important items, such as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. This is the wish of the great majority of Conference members. I am convinced that work on these three items will have a positive effect on promoting FMCT negotiations.

China has always supported the work of the Conference on Disarmament and is in favour of starting FMCT negotiations as soon as possible. During China's tenure as President of the Conference on Disarmament this year, it has cooperated fully with other Presidents, conducted broad-based consultations with member States and made unremitting efforts to narrow differences and break the impasse. We hope that all sides will respect each other's legitimate security concerns and continue dialogue and consultations in a serious, equal, open and transparent manner with a view to reaching agreement on the programme of work of the Conference as soon as

possible so that substantive work on various items can begin.

Taking forward the international arms control and disarmament process is in the interests of all parties and is the historic responsibility of all States. We believe in the political will and collective wisdom of the States members of the Conference on Disarmament and remain confident that the Conference will launch FMCT negotiations and start substantive work in other areas. Meanwhile, we make an urgent call on all parties to make new efforts and attempts to that end. China is willing to work with others and redouble its efforts to promote the healthy development of the cause of multilateral arms control and disarmament and to maintain world peace and security.

**Mr. Schaper** (Netherlands): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the following 41 States: Australia, Austria, Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Uruguay.

These States, from many regions across the globe, share the commitment to strengthen the multilateral disarmament system — and this will be the theme of my remarks today — so that this system can fulfil its purpose. We thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting, which provides an opportunity to assess the progress made since the adoption of resolution 65/93 on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The 41 States I just mentioned consider it regrettable that, for more than a decade, the multilateral disarmament machinery, and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, have not met the expectations of the international community, as expressed in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S/10-2) and the decisions and recommendations contained in numerous General Assembly resolutions and in outcome documents of the Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Conference on Disarmament is simply failing to

fulfil its mandate. It is failing to address the pressing security challenges facing the international community through effective multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

For several years now, this lack of progress on new multilateral disarmament instruments has directly affected our common security in the twenty-first century and weakened the multilateral disarmament system. While progress has been made in other multilateral disarmament forums, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to unlock its potential or to agree on the issue of wider participation by interested States and on enhanced engagement with members of civil society.

Our countries find this sorry picture of stagnation, stalemate and lack of results in the Conference on Disarmament unacceptable. We see an urgent need to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. In this regard, we are highly appreciative of the Secretary-General's initiatives in support of such efforts.

The High-level Meeting of 24 September 2010 highlighted the views of States on the causes of the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. But above all, the High-level Meeting made it more evident that the international community wants to move beyond mere deliberations to action, and without further delay.

As members may be aware, during the course of 2011 Conference on Disarmament members in Geneva have increasingly voiced and documented their concerns about the deadlock, including during an interaction with you, Sir, on the occasion of your visit to Geneva in March. They have also expressed their concerns to the Secretary-General and the members of his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

But despite the considerable efforts of consecutive Conference on Disarmament Presidents for more than a decade, despite various suggestions and initiatives of Conference members, and despite the adoption of decisions that would have seen the Conference fulfil its mandate, the Conference is still failing to undertake substantive work.

Here in New York, the United Nations Disarmament Commission regrettably once again failed to produce any concrete recommendations. We

consider this to be an additional indicator of the continued challenges facing the wider multilateral disarmament machinery.

If the multilateral disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament, is not able to overcome this crisis, the international community, and the General Assembly in particular, will need to respond and give serious consideration to ways and means to overcome it. We cannot afford to start another Conference session in January 2012 accepting that the continued impasse is a given and that we cannot do anything about it.

Already, States are discussing various options. Some focus on giving the General Assembly a more central and active role in advancing multilateral disarmament negotiations. Some focus on implementing agreements previously reached in the Conference on Disarmament and other relevant multilateral forums. Some seek to intensify preparations for negotiations. Some focus on efforts to motivate a formal revitalization process within the Conference on Disarmament, and some seek to include a broader reform process of the disarmament machinery.

Although these different initiatives point to different focuses, they are all being explored -- and need to be explored -- in order to improve global security, including through finding the most effective way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. We hope that this debate can provide us with a suitable platform to keep addressing, in a transparent and inclusive manner, all possible future options for taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations effectively and in an outcome-oriented spirit. We must assume our responsibility, both in Geneva and here, to address these concerns effectively without further delay.

We welcome the attention of the Secretary-General and his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to the problems facing the disarmament machinery. At the same time, we recognize that the responsibility for current difficulties rests with States, as does the responsibility to find solutions. We stand ready to contribute actively and constructively to this forward-looking endeavour. All the States of the world have a vital interest, a right and a duty to participate in and contribute to the success of multilateral disarmament negotiations.

**Mr. Kim Sook** (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in expressing my sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this meeting. As one of the member countries that co-signed the letter requesting this gathering, the Republic of Korea associates itself with the remarks made just now by the representative of the Netherlands. At this juncture, however, I would like to speak in my national capacity.

In recent years, we have taken many positive steps towards the long-awaited breakthrough in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Just last year alone, we witnessed the signing of the New START agreement, the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C., and the adoption of the decade-spanning Final Document by consensus at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)). In particular, the adoption of the Final Document at the 2010 NPT Review Conference amounts to a formal recognition by the international community that disarmament and non-proliferation are once again becoming central to the global agenda.

After these series of positive movements in other disarmament areas, our expectation for the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament is now greater than at any other time in recent years. Reflecting the aspirations of the international community, a High-level Meeting was convened by the Secretary-General in September 2010 as a response of the international community to the Conference on Disarmament. We have also observed various efforts made by many delegations this year. Nevertheless, the Conference continues to make little progress and the patience of the international community is gradually running out. Moreover, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) has also failed to produce any final documents or recommendations since 1999. The multilateral disarmament machinery is, in fact, in severe disarray.

We believe that getting the Conference on Disarmament back on track lies at the heart of any solution. Further paralysis of the Conference may not only jeopardize its status and legitimacy as the premier forum for disarmament, but also damage the very foundations of the multilateral disarmament machinery, including the UNDC. I firmly believe that the Conference on Disarmament should act quickly if it wishes to continue to play a central role.

To encourage the Conference on Disarmament to move forward, it is necessary above all for each country to demonstrate more political flexibility with respect to its security considerations and *modus operandi*. Only when countries show flexibility and a spirit of cooperation will the Conference be able to evolve significantly and keep up with the rapidly changing disarmament climate. What the Conference process needs now is not an endless and empty debate, but concrete action.

As the Republic of Korea proposed at the September 2010 High-level Meeting, and as the Secretary-General suggested again this morning, I would like to call for the establishment of a group of eminent persons, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to find solutions to the current difficulties in the Conference on Disarmament.

In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/65/228), in which he supports the establishment of such a group. The Secretary-General's Advisory Board noted that a group of eminent persons could help behind-the-scenes negotiations and draw significant global attention to the issue. We have recently witnessed similar kinds of groups in the fields of Millennium Development Goals and climate change financing. These cases could be good examples.

As we know, the Conference on Disarmament is a child of the General Assembly, and it is natural for the Assembly to discuss the predicament of its child. In this regard, I believe that not only internal efforts of the Conference on Disarmament but also external political stimulus may be of great help in breaking the deadlock in the Conference. I hope that the First Committee of the General Assembly will continue this year to discuss ways to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery.

The Republic of Korea is of the opinion that the international community shares the common view that, among all the issues in the Conference on Disarmament, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons is most in need of negotiation. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is indispensable not only for nuclear non-proliferation, but also for nuclear disarmament. An FMCT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are of vital importance, symbolically and

substantively, to the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We are confident that once we start the negotiations on an FMCT, the momentum will lead to further discussions on other major issues, such as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances, in a comprehensive and balanced way.

Once again, the Republic of Korea calls upon all Conference on Disarmament members to cooperate in commencing substantive work on an FMCT at the earliest possible time, to the benefit not only of nuclear non-proliferation, but also and more largely of nuclear disarmament. The Republic of Korea, for its part, will do its utmost to set the Conference on Disarmament process in motion.

**Mr. Zhukov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation wholeheartedly supports the revitalization of the multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control machinery. We support the preservation and strengthening of the existing disarmament triad: the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. These forums have proven their necessity and their efficiency, and they have made a significant contribution to preserving international peace and security.

In our view, it is not now a matter of radically reorganizing them, but rather of marshalling the political will to kick-start these mechanisms to create new universal disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. We believe that the current situation of the multilateral disarmament process, specifically within the Conference on Disarmament, is the result not of any systemic breakdown in the multilateral disarmament machinery, but rather a reflection of the different priorities of States on disarmament and non-proliferation matters and in their vision of their legitimate national interests. The roots of the Conference's problems are extraneous to it.

Obviously, the Conference on Disarmament deals with very sensitive matters, namely, those of State security. Here as nowhere else, we must be willing to strike a reasonable compromise based on a balance of interests. In addition, we should not oversimplify the reasons behind the situation in the Conference on Disarmament or boil them down to procedural disagreements or clashes of ambitions and claims.

Significantly, notwithstanding the radical recent calls for the Conference on Disarmament to be closed down, for changes to its basic working principles or for a launch of new formats, an absolute majority of forum participants broadly recognized the importance of retaining the Conference on Disarmament as the key multilateral negotiation mechanism. The shock therapy proposed by some countries is a radical step that could not only paralyse the Conference on Disarmament definitively, but also seriously undermine the entire disarmament triad and ultimately destroy the existing disarmament machinery.

We cannot agree to such an approach. There is no silver bullet. Our aim must be to engage in a patient and respectful quest for mutually acceptable ways of breaking the deadlock, rather than taking rash and hasty steps and decisions. This pertains not only to procedural but also to substantive matters, not to mention punitive measures, such as the denial of financing.

In that regard, we support the balanced approach taken by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, to the effect that stagnation on the disarmament track, including at the Conference, is due mainly not to shortcomings in the mechanism but to the world geopolitical situation, strategic clashes between States and the lack of political will.

We oppose any review of the Conference on Disarmament's main working principle of consensus. At the same time, we are prepared to be flexible and seek fresh approaches that could break the deadlock. In that context, one interesting idea would be to broaden the membership of the Conference, to promote the greater involvement of non-governmental bodies, and to enhance public communications on disarmament matters.

Universal disarmament agreements can be elaborated under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of consensus. It is only in such circumstances that agreements become functional and adaptable to new realities and challenges. The diversion of negotiations onto parallel tracks among likeminded States is unlikely to lead to any universal or viable treaty. We are convinced that the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament would be in the interests of all Member States. We see no alternative to patient and respectful dialogue aimed at allaying the security concerns of particular Conference members, or

to the achievement of agreement on the basis of the Conference agenda.

Document CD/1864 is a realistic basis for compromise. By supporting it, the Russian Federation demonstrated its willingness to take the positions of its partners into account and to agree to compromise. We expect the same of our partners. The Russian Federation's priority within the Conference on Disarmament is to develop a treaty on the prohibition of all types of weapons in outer space. The draft treaty submitted by us and China takes the interests of all States into account, without exception.

Another important challenge is the drafting of a universal, equitable and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Its adoption would be one further step towards strengthening the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime.

**Mr. Bavaud** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank and congratulate you, Sir, for convening this follow-up meeting to the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, of 24 September 2010. Your initiative and engagement will undoubtedly help us to move forward on this issue.

Switzerland fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of 40 countries. Allow me to add a few elements from the Swiss perspective.

Switzerland fully supports the Secretary-General's initiatives to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations and to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This process has already had significant effects. Since September 2010, we have seen important discussions in the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Over the past 10 months, it has become clear that a growing number of States find the lack of progress on various issues related to disarmament unacceptable. In the course of these deliberations, it has also become evident that more and more States see the urgent need to revitalize the disarmament machinery and to start substantive work, most notably in the form of negotiations on one or several of the four core issues on the Conference's agenda.

Switzerland is convinced that the ongoing lack of agreement on new multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments has undermined the multilateral disarmament system — a trend that will be in the interest of no State in the long run. To address this situation, we need to pursue complementing efforts undertaken within the Conference on Disarmament by marshalling political will and stepping up pressure outside that body. We also need to understand that the current deadlock cannot be attributed solely to external political factors, but is also linked to institutional issues. The existing mechanisms are manifestly unable to catalyze the necessary political will and to capitalize on it where it is developing.

To move forward, we also need to have institutions and mechanisms that reflect and capable of addressing current realities. We are living in a global, interdependent world that faces a multitude of shared disarmament and non-proliferation challenges. It is important to move from one-dimensional approaches to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation to more holistic approaches. It is critical to recognize that disarmament and non-proliferation activities affect numerous areas of concern to the international community other than peace and security; they have an impact on human security, human rights, development, the environment and health, to name just a few. Only if we include these aspects into our considerations will we be able to confront the challenges we are facing.

Our institutions should no longer be based on or continuously favour a clearly outdated conception of an all-prevailing national security paradigm. If they do not change, the Conference on Disarmament may run the risk of privileging the interests of some at the expense of the interests of the overwhelming majority of States and peoples of the world. We are convinced of the need to work inclusively and to build on the views of all stakeholders, such as other interested States, expert communities or civil society representatives.

We need institutions that are designed to produce results and not to maintain the status quo. They must be both responsive and preventive, and thus able to produce the instruments needed to address current as well as future challenges. Switzerland therefore recalls that the international community needs mechanisms, platforms and environments that encourage meaningful, timely, inclusive and effective deliberations and negotiations on all issues relating to

disarmament in a larger sense. This must be our long-term goal.

While the High-level Meeting of 24 September 2010 was intended to promote the debate on how to overcome the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, the situation has not improved since then. In many ways, the deadlock is today more severe. Switzerland is of the view that we now need to complement the current dialogue with real action on various levels and on several fronts at the same time and in a sustainable manner.

In the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, for the remainder of the year and for the 2012 session, it is important to initiate substantive work within the existing framework and to start negotiations. The Conference must also continue the ongoing reflection on its strengths and weaknesses in a more systematic and outcome-oriented way with a view to making the necessary changes to make the Conference more functional. The Conference has no option but to demonstrate that it can produce results.

At the sixty-sixth session of the First Committee, Member States may want to consider launching issue-specific processes, for instance setting open-ended working groups on nuclear disarmament issues, including fissile material or the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such processes should be anchored in Geneva, making use of the unparalleled expertise available in and around the Conference on Disarmament. If they are to be sustainable and provide an incentive to the Conference to resume its work, such processes should be complementary with possible future breakthroughs in that forum and be designed in a way that allows relevant results to be transmitted to the Conference at an appropriate stage.

At the broader level of the General Assembly, Member States should take forward the revitalization process by introducing fresh thinking, new ideas and pragmatic approaches. Such groundwork is essential to paving the way for the broader support needed to launch a deeper reform process. In this regard, the implementation of the recommendation contained in the recent report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters on the setting-up of a high-level panel charged with the task of rapidly formulating proposals on such a reform could represent a constructive way forward.

To conclude, I would like to stress that as we try to move forward in our efforts to revitalize the multilateral disarmament machinery, Switzerland remains convinced of the need for a permanently available pool of disarmament delegations — supported by experts from Governments, international organizations and civil society — to review implementation issues of existing agreements and to negotiate new instruments. We also continue to believe in the need for a permanent forum, similar to the Conference on Disarmament, that addresses challenges in our field and contributes to global security in the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Benítez Versón** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba reaffirms the importance of promoting multilateralism as the core principle of disarmament negotiations. Multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

Within the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament plays a crucial role in the multilateral negotiation of universally accepted disarmament treaties. If the Conference did not exist, we would have to create it without delay. We regret that the Conference has been unable to carry out substantive work for over a decade. Some insist that the causes lie in its working methods and rules of procedure. Cuba does not share that interpretation. The best vindication of our assessment is that what has happened to the Conference on Disarmament is far from an isolated situation within the disarmament machinery.

For instance, it is no coincidence that the United Nations Disarmament Commission concluded its work again this year, for the twelfth consecutive time, without agreeing on substantive recommendations. In addition, every year the First Committee adopts dozens of resolutions — particularly on disarmament — that are simply not implemented. The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has still not been convened, in spite of the fact that the Non-Aligned Movement has insisted on this matter for many years.

Cuba supports the optimization of the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament. However, we are convinced that the paralysis currently affecting most of

the disarmament machinery is caused first and foremost by the lack of political will on the part of some States to achieve genuine results, particularly on disarmament.

We are concerned about the insinuations by some delegations that the time has come to set aside the Conference on Disarmament and turn to alternative negotiation processes. Cuba opposes the replacement of the Conference with selective, improvised ad hoc arrangements outside the framework of the United Nations and managed by certain countries. If such criteria are imposed, we would be taking a dangerous step backwards. The solution is not to start disregarding the Conference on Disarmament or to minimize its importance. On the contrary, today more than ever, its preservation and strengthening are the responsibility of us all.

The Conference must adopt as soon as possible a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes real disarmament priorities into consideration. Cuba is ready to negotiate, in parallel with the Conference on Disarmament, a treaty that eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons; a treaty that bans the arms race in outer space; a treaty that provides effective security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, like Cuba; and a treaty that bans the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament is capable of supporting these negotiations simultaneously.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty for the manufacture of nuclear weapons would be a positive action, but still insufficient in and of itself if the subsequent steps to achieve nuclear disarmament are not defined.

Nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest priority in disarmament. On this basis, consensus must be achieved in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference must urgently commence negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and of doctrines prescribing their possession and use poses a serious threat to international peace and security. It is simply unacceptable that there are almost 23,000 nuclear

weapons in the world today, 7,560 of which are ready for immediate use.

On 22 August, Cuba will assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and the responsibility to draft and negotiate the report of that body for presentation to the First Committee. It is our firm purpose to make every possible effort to promote substantive negotiations with that body, in accordance with its mandate to negotiate international treaties on disarmament and arms control. That will require the contribution of each and every member of the Conference. The opportunity to prove our commitment to disarmament and peace through concrete actions is in our hands.

**Mr. Sin Son Ho** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me first of all extend my appreciation to you, Sir, for having organized this important meeting today. Allow me also to express my hope that this meeting will provide a good opportunity to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and return it to the right track.

My delegation fully supports the statement made by Mr. Maged A. Abdelaziz, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Nuclear disarmament remains a top priority in securing world peace and security. The first appearance of nuclear weapons in 1945 marked the beginning of the history of the most destructive weapons ever used against humankind. The dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, was its central event, more than amply proving to the world the destructive consequences of even a single nuclear weapon for global peace and security. Moreover, the appearance of the first nuclear-weapon State in 1945 was a fundamental root cause of nuclear proliferation to the rest of the world, resulting in a chain reaction. If the successes of a sacred human science had not been used to an ill-famed and dangerous end that could result in the destruction of all humankind, the proliferation of nuclear weapons might not be an issue today. As we can see, nuclear weapons are a matter directly relating to the survival of humankind and to the peace and security of the world.

The nuclear-weapon States have an unavoidable obligation to implement their commitments under the existing international norms. In 1996, the International Court of Justice made it very clear to the world that the

use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law. It brought to our attention the fact that all other existing weapons without exception are under the full control of treaties or conventions, but that nuclear weapons remain outside multilateral international laws. The same is true of negative security assurances towards non-nuclear-weapon States.

Recent developments cast dark shadows over the prospects for nuclear disarmament, focusing the attention of the international community. Nuclear-weapons modernization programmes are openly propelled by nuclear doctrines that recall the Cold War. I bring to members' attention the fact that projects are under way to develop small nuclear weapons to be used like conventional weapons.

In addition to this, the development of a missile defence system is making steady headway, in defiance of international concerns. The system being promoted under the pretext of responding to so-called ballistic missile developments by what some call "rogue States" is far from logical, given its exorbitant funding and geographical network covering the entire world. The nature and scope of the missile defence system speak eloquently of its defender's real target, which is none other than gaining absolute nuclear superiority and global hegemony over its nuclear rivals.

In the current changing world, one can easily predict that this dangerous move will eventually spark a new nuclear arms race. This shows that the world's largest nuclear-weapon State has lost its legal and moral justification to talk of proliferation issues before the international community, on whatever grounds. If the largest nuclear-weapon State truly wants non-proliferation, it should set a good example by negotiating a treaty abolishing nuclear weapons.

The total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons remains the consistent policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A treaty abolishing nuclear weapons should be concluded in a time-bound, verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner. This policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a good reflection of the unique and special security environment to which the country has been exposed for decades under continuing external nuclear threat and blackmail. Since the first nuclear weapon was introduced into South Korea in 1957 by the United States, the number of nuclear weapons there has exceeded 1,000.

As a state member and the current President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do everything possible to move the Conference forward. Nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, and the banning of outer space weapons and fissile materials are all pending issues in the Conference. It is regrettable that nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances have not yet been settled, although they have a history of decades-long discussion that began with the establishment of the United Nations.

The cause of the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, which has persisted for more than a decade, is a lack of political will. If the Conference is to move forward, the security interests of all member countries should be fully considered. In this regard, the programme of work adopted by the Conference in 2009 is something of value to be reconsidered, since it reflects on an equal basis all the pending issues on the agenda.

**Mr. Ragolini (Italy):** Allow me at the outset to reaffirm my delegation's gratitude to you, Sir, for having arranged this debate on the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, in follow-up to the High-Level Meeting convened in September 2010 by the Secretary-General.

We fully subscribe to the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Observer of the European Union. We also share the views presented by the delegation of the Netherlands on behalf of a number of like-minded States, including my own. I would like, however, to make a few comments in my national capacity, as a contribution to the debate and to identify a possible concrete follow-up to this initiative and to the general exercise launched last year.

The Conference on Disarmament has been stalled for more than a decade. It has not been able to perform its core task, which is negotiating global international instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. But I would argue that the whole international disarmament machinery is currently experiencing serious difficulties. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, while remaining a useful forum for in-depth discussion, has not been able to agree on substantial recommendations or decisions for many years.

In general, although we have seen significant successes in recent years, they have been achieved

bilaterally, in forums other than the Conference on Disarmament or through ad hoc formats outside the established United Nations disarmament machinery. Still, Italy firmly believes in the importance and genuine need of a forum dedicated to global disarmament negotiations that will advance the cause of international peace and disarmament.

To continue asserting that the Conference on Disarmament is not functioning due to a lack of political will is, in our opinion, no longer credible. For example, this year two member States took it upon themselves to organize three well-attended and very successful side events on specific aspects of the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in an effort to overcome the procedure-driven inertia of the Conference. The side events significantly enhanced the membership's knowledge of key topics of a future Treaty that will prove to be to everyone's advantage once negotiations start.

What is thwarting the Conference on Disarmament is, rather, in our opinion, the misuse of the rules of procedure by a small number of members. In 2009, the Conference adopted by consensus a programme of work to carry out negotiations on an FMCT and to set up four ad hoc working groups, one of which was tasked with undertaking these negotiations. However, the Conference was prevented from implementing the programme of work in the absence of consensus on organizational matters, such as establishing the time, place and chair rotation for the meetings. Further thought should, therefore, be given to reviewing some of the working methods of the Conference so as to make them more effective and more efficient.

Other provisions of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament also warrant a reappraisal. The monthly rotation of the presidency appears to be too frequent, to the detriment of continuity in the Conference's work. As a preliminary suggestion, two presidencies a year would appear to be more appropriate. The President's decision-making authority could also be better specified. Furthermore, the rule requiring the adoption every year of a work programme appears to be unwise. It allows any member, immediately after 31 December, to indefinitely block negotiations. Consideration should be given to maintaining the same programme of work initially adopted by the Conference for the following years

unless the membership agrees by consensus on a new one.

Of course, we are not blind to the hurdles in modifying the Conference's rules of procedure. As we stated last year at the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament, there are no procedural solutions to political problems. Nonetheless, we are also convinced that the issue must be addressed with courage and commitment to succeed, while looking to solve the underlying political problems. That requires an effort by the whole membership of the Conference.

Resumption of the work of the Conference on Disarmament can no longer be postponed. It has become a matter of urgency. The ongoing stalemate is quickly destroying what is left of its prestige and authority.

If by the end of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly no decision has been taken to compel the Conference to start negotiations as indicated in CD/1864 — the work programme approved in 2009 — we fear that the proposal to move them outside the Conference will gain momentum. While not enthusiastic regarding such an outcome, Italy will certainly not oppose it, as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are priority areas of our foreign policy.

To facilitate reaching agreement on the revitalization of the Conference, Italy is open to proposals for future discussions on negative security assurances (NSAs), with a view to a possible future start of negotiations on this question. While a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) represents the tool to stem supplies of the main raw materials of nuclear weapons, NSAs would be needed to reassure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear arms.

Those are two goals that completely reflect our common aspiration of a world free of nuclear weapons. They also represent a way to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this context, we should also bear in mind that the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions adopted last year at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol.I)) mention, as substantive tasks for the Conference, only those two items: FMCT and NSAs.

Today's debate confirms the international community's attention to the Conference and the disarmament machinery in general. The General Assembly can play a specific role in this field, while today's discussions can actually be a catalyst for further action. We hope that as soon as in the Assembly's next session, particularly in the First Committee, we will take this discussion forward and come up with concrete ideas on how to relaunch negotiations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Mr. Kmentt** (Austria): I would like to express to you, Mr. President, our appreciation for scheduling today's General Assembly debate on this important agenda item, which had been requested by Austria together with 48 other Member States. However, I would also like to express Austria's disappointment that this debate had actually become a necessity, because it is a clear sign of failure that we have been able neither to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament nor to take forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, as requested in the High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament last year.

We fully associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and also with the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of a cross-regional group of Member States. In addition, we would like to offer the following comments.

Like others, Austria has welcomed the recent positive momentum in international security policy. At the same time, expectations of the international community to engage in concrete multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations continue to be frustrated. The multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, remains in deadlock. The momentum that we hoped to generate over the past year did not materialize. While there has been a strong convergence on diagnosing the Conference's illnesses, no agreement on the necessary medicine has been reached so far.

On procedural issues, for instance, in our view the Conference's procedural architecture, particularly its consensus rule, is inadequate for the twenty-first century. Austria finds the procedural hostage-taking of the kind that we see in the Conference unacceptable. It

is our shared responsibility to find ways to prevent such a continued abuse of the consensus rule.

Its past successes notwithstanding, the Conference on Disarmament has become a forum where multilateral engagement on disarmament can be pretended safely, given that procedural tools seem to guarantee an unrestricted veto at all times. The Conference's refusal to admit new members and the dismal practice regarding engagement with civil society are other examples of the Conference's obsolete and outdated working methods.

The Conference is not confronted with a procedural problem alone, though. Ultimately, the Conference is and has been in paralysis for such a long time due to political issues, and insufficient political will to overcome them. States members of the Conference cannot agree to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which Austria would like to see start without delay. There is opposition today from one member State to starting those negotiations.

However, the political issues of the Conference on Disarmament and the reasons for its deadlock go deeper. Responsibility for the Conference and for its paralysis since 1997 is more widely shared. Furthermore, it is not only the FMCT that does not muster consensus. Nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances are also divisive issues. The ultimate problem is therefore the lack of real political commitment to address disarmament and non-proliferation through multilateralism leading to multilateral treaties. It is this lack of commitment that the Conference on Disarmament has come to epitomize more than any other forum.

This begs the question whether the Conference can in fact still serve as an effective forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. In Austria's view, the Conference has not only lost much of its credibility but is also risking its legitimacy. For the past 14 years, the Conference has failed to deliver on the mandate. We cannot continue with this wishful-thinking approach, which makes us believe that we are just about to break the impasse in the Conference.

Austria is firmly committed to multilateralism and attaches great importance to the multilateral institutions. Yet those institutions are not a purpose in themselves. Ultimately, we are not committed to the

Conference on Disarmament as an institution but to progress on multilateral disarmament negotiations.

After diagnosing the problems, is there a therapy? In our view, there are essentially two options.

On the one hand, we could continue to work through and within the Conference, working with and waiting for member States to finally reach consensus. However, it is clear that political will cannot be forced upon member States. After 14 years of trying in vain to bridge the gaps on a balanced programme of work, this does not look very promising.

States members of the Conference could also try to stimulate progress by addressing the Conference's working methods, for instance by clarifying that the consensus rule does not apply to procedural questions such as the programme of work, or that it could be suspended in exceptional cases. States members could finally admit those States that have expressed their wish to participate in the work of the Conference and facilitate fresh thinking by opening the Conference to outside expertise and input from civil society.

Those would be important steps. However, they, too, have been discussed for many years without real progress. We therefore have doubts both as to the chances of finding agreement on even such modest steps within the Conference and, more importantly, about whether they would actually contribute to bringing about a political breakthrough.

In our view, we should therefore consider another course of action and explore options outside the framework of the Conference also. We could, for example, envisage the General Assembly playing a more active, direct and central role in disarmament negotiations.

The absence of political will — or worse, real commitment to multilateral progress — on the part of some should be no reason to prevent the rest of the international community from moving forward. We believe strongly that political will can also be generated through process, by starting negotiations and addressing the issues that have been stuck on the agenda for so many years. It is against this background that Austria expects that the next session of the First Committee will decide in substance on how to move forward and enable multilateral disarmament negotiations. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

What counts, in the final analysis, is substantive success. We have to ensure that our instruments facilitate success and do not become, to the contrary, an obstacle to success. Since last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we have a renewed and clear commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. This is a collective commitment and we need to act on it. We must begin focusing in concrete terms on the parameters that will enable us to reach this goal through the Conference on Disarmament, the General Assembly or any other constructive multilateral approach.

**Mr. Kleib (Indonesia):** Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this meeting on such an important issue.

Indonesia fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Long committed to a world free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, Indonesia expects that today's discussion will generate clear political momentum to enable us to overcome the obstacles that have continued to hamper progress on multilateral disarmament goals.

At the High-level Meeting of 24 September 2010, we saw a real opportunity to resolve the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in the wake of the consensus adoption of the Final Document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the New START agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation. By any token, those were two significant and highly worthy achievements. A break in the decades-old impasse in nuclear disarmament finally seemed to be in reach. New hope was kindled that, by building on these critical achievements and emerging understanding, the international community could realize the vision of a nuclear-weapons free world in the foreseeable future.

The dismay at the absence of tangible progress on the global nuclear disarmament agenda since the September meeting is thus understandable. The Conference on Disarmament remains unable to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work in Geneva, and the United Nations Disarmament

Commission concluded yet another session in New York without agreeing to substantive recommendations.

Despite expressions of commitment last year, there has also been little progress on the implementation of the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference, including its mandate on holding the crucial 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Indonesia underscores the importance of delivering fully on internationally agreed commitments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is high time that all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, honour the commitments they have undertaken on complete nuclear disarmament. Undertaking time-bound actions to that end is the best way to build confidence and to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament can be reinvigorated and meaningful disarmament negotiations commenced.

We should be clear. As stated by the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement this morning, it is not that the United Nations disarmament machinery itself is problematic, for it was this machinery which enabled the drafting of guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as for conventional arms control, limitation and disarmament. The Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, among others, were made possible through this machinery and its predecessor system.

We agree that procedures are very important, but we should not have any illusions. If the will to attain goals is lacking, the best of procedures will not bear fruit. Indonesia is confident that, given the political will, the Conference on Disarmament can advance negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, negative security assurances, a fissile material cut-off treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate, and a treaty on the prevention of arms race in outer space.

We also stress the continued validity of the consensus Final Document adopted at first special session on disarmament (resolution S-10/2), which set out a comprehensive disarmament strategy by the largest-ever gathering of States. We urge all States once again to play their part in convening a fourth special session on disarmament and making it a fitting success.

Allow me to conclude by underlining again the significance of this meeting in galvanizing political action for achieving concrete disarmament steps. We must all work together and promote measures to abolish the scourge of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from our planet. To this end, Indonesia, as in the past, is determined to continue to play an active role.

**Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica welcomes this opportunity for the General Assembly to assess the status of the international disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that this debate will revitalize the work of the Conference, renew the political will to transform it, reform its working methods and thereby improve it.

Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands on behalf of 41 States that sponsored resolution 65/93, which lay the groundwork for this debate. Despite its closed membership, its state of deadlock, and our inability to participate in it as a member with full rights, the Conference on Disarmament, for Costa Rica, is still the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We recognize its leading role in strengthening global security and promoting international stability. We have held this view since 1994, when we expressed our legitimate but unsatisfied interest in participating in the Conference, which we reiterate now as an active member of the Geneva-based informal group of observer States.

Disarmament is not an isolated exercise relating only to military affairs; it is an organic process that interests and affects all of us, and on which we must constantly strive to make progress through productive negotiations. We are therefore greatly concerned at the paralysis in the Conference, its continuing repetition of the same routines and same mistakes, and the significant resources required to maintain its rituals. Through these grave failures, the Conference has compromised its capacity to address emerging security problems and generated justified dissatisfaction and impatience.

However, the major reasons behind the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament are not limited to its current working methods; perhaps more important is the militaristic, as opposed to humanistic, approach

that has prevailed to date. The time has come to approach disarmament in terms of its value for human security and arms control through the lens of international humanitarian law and human rights. By doing so, we could turn the conceptual thrust of the debate in a more positive — and, in our view, effective — direction.

The main tools for promoting and maintaining national and international security are not weapons, but respect for human security and dignity and the rule of law. We do not deny the right of countries to military defence, despite the fact that we opted to abolish our armed forces more than 60 years ago. However, we are convinced that while an essentially militaristic approach to security and disarmament might bring us closer to arms regulation and the control of international arsenals, it will never lead to global disarmament.

To be blunt, with the Conference on Disarmament we are experiencing only the illusion of disarmament. It is the illusion that destroying certain weapons signifies progress, despite their being immediately replaced by more powerful ones; it is the illusion whereby certain weapons are proscribed because the strategic advantage they may have is exponentially inferior to that offered by newer and more advanced ones; it is the illusion of fulfilling the requirements of civil society, when in fact the only result is a paralysed, and paralyzing, process.

The Conference on Disarmament, furthermore, operates like a closed club, in which only one third of the States Members of the United Nations have the responsibility of negotiating global disarmament. It is paradoxical, for example, that this group does not include a single one of the 27 countries that do not have armed forces, and thus military disarmament has taken second place to national realities.

Global military spending reached \$1.6 trillion in 2010. On its own, this figure tells us little. Yet if we invested just 10 per cent of that sum annually until 2015, the international community would be in a position to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by that date.

Costa Rica believes that any efforts aimed at revitalizing and restructuring the multilateral disarmament negotiations must focus on human security, as we said earlier. That focus was key in the negotiations on banning anti-personnel landmines and

cluster munitions. It was also been instrumental in the preparatory meetings for a robust arms trade treaty.

Nuclear weapons have already been determined to be incompatible with international law and international humanitarian law in particular. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the unanimous decision taken by the International Court of Justice in 1996, affirm that there is a legal obligation on the part of States to commence and conclude negotiations on the global prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

To build trust and send a signal of goodwill in order to allow for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament or in another body, the nuclear-weapon States should abandon their plans for the modernization, replacement or upgrading of those weapons.

My delegation does not consider conducive to disarmament the fact that nuclear-weapon States bring to the negotiating table a merely "representative" reduction, while channelling considerable resources into research on and the modernization of facilities that are capable of maintaining or multiplying these threats.

In conclusion, Costa Rica believes that the multilateral disarmament bodies and processes, such as the Conference on Disarmament, could begin to interact and cooperate with the bodies in charge of the promotion and protection of human rights and international humanitarian law, with the goal of more effectively following up on the implementation of States' duties in those areas in the light of their commitments to disarmament.

Costa Rica deems it necessary that the implementation of disarmament agreements be incorporated as a factor in the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. We sometimes hear that seeking to create a more just and secure world on the basis of a humanitarian approach towards disarmament and arms control is but wishful thinking. We do not agree with this assessment. Rather, what we have observed, as undeniable evidence, is the paralysis in the Conference with respect to the militaristic approach. We still have time to reorient the Conference on Disarmament in such a way as to equip it with new paradigms, better working methods and real compromise.

**Mrs. Viotti (Brazil):** Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations are essential steps towards a more secure world. The international community has repeatedly reaffirmed that the threat posed by the mere existence of nuclear arsenals must be tackled with steadfast political will. Our common purpose must be to achieve the long-sought-after goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We take note with interest of the recent report of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. The difficulty facing the members of the Advisory Board in proposing solutions to the deadlock in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, as is evident in the document, proves that the reasons for the stalemate are political and therefore not related to institutional or procedural issues in the Conference. It is thus important to emphasize the recommendation made in the report that the Secretary-General, if he decides to convene a high-level panel of eminent persons, request a study on the means to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery in general.

Brazil believes that any reform effort should consider the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole and not only the Conference on Disarmament. That is why we support the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on Disarmament, which could examine the institutional structure established by the first special session on disarmament, held in 1978. We discourage any initiatives that try to partially amend the operation of the machinery based on a limited goal and restricted to only one subject, such as, for example, fissile material.

Brazil considers that the Conference on Disarmament is the only body duly constituted by the international community to negotiate nuclear disarmament. While we attach the highest priority to the elimination of nuclear weapons through the adoption of a convention on nuclear disarmament, we support the launching of negotiations on the other three core issues of the agenda of the Conference, namely, fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We do not endorse the view that only the issue of a treaty on fissile material is ripe for negotiations. Nor do we support the thesis that only one country should be held responsible for the stalemate in the work of the

Conference. If this is true with respect to the subject of a treaty on fissile material, other countries have blocked the negotiation of instruments related to the other agenda items.

Even with regard to a treaty on fissile material, there exists a clear difference of views between Member States. Brazil advocates the negotiation of a treaty that takes into consideration the issue of stocks. A treaty limited to the prohibition of production would have little or no effect on nuclear disarmament.

The criticism of the institutional aspects of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular regarding its rules of procedure, is not consistent. One could ask whether the countries denouncing the abuse of the rule of consensus in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) would be ready to accept majority decisions on other issues that are under consideration by the Conference. Negotiations affecting the security of States are always sensitive and complex. The rule of consensus is a special procedure of the Conference on Disarmament that reflects this reality.

Brazil supports the consideration of the expansion of the membership of the Conference, as this would promote richer and more comprehensive discussions within that body. We also advocate the

increased participation of civil society in following the work of the Conference, since that would contribute to a greater awareness about the challenges faced in the area of nuclear disarmament.

It is certainly a matter of concern that the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament continues to prevail despite the efforts made in the last few years, based on positive developments in the disarmament and non-proliferation scenario, particularly the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The existence of nuclear weapons constitutes the most immediate threat to the survival of humankind. The negotiation of instruments conducive to nuclear disarmament is therefore urgent. The question that one should ask, however, is the following: Would the international community be in a better position to negotiate those instruments without the Conference on Disarmament? Brazil believes that, despite its shortcomings, there really is no alternative to the Conference. That is why revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament cannot mean finding ways to circumvent it.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*